

**A HISTORY OF KIRKBY FLEETHAM
KIPLIN HALL
Researched by KEITH PROUD**

KIPLIN HALL

The builder of Kiplin Hall, just south-east of Scorton, was an Englishman who, early in the 17th century, founded the state of Maryland on North America's eastern seaboard.

George Calvert was born in 1582 at Kiplin, close to where the great red brick house he created as a hunting lodge between 1622 and 1625 now stands. He lived at the time when more and more gentlemen adventurers, fired by the exploits of Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh, were crossing the Atlantic with small bands of servants and followers to make their fortunes in the New World. After graduating from Trinity College, Oxford, at the age of 17 with a degree in municipal law, he first went abroad and on his return soon found favour and employment as secretary with the powerful Sir Robert Cecil, Chief Minister to King James I. As a trusted advisor, by 1617 he had risen to become Sir George Calvert of Danby Wiske and in 1619, the year in which he bought the Kiplin Estate which his father had only leased from Lord Wharton, was made James' Secretary of State.

Two years later, he acquired property in Newfoundland and eventually went with a group of like-minded followers to establish a colony there. Avalon, as he called the place, was a brave venture which failed essentially because the weather there was harsh and the soil poor. In 1625, Calvert informed James that he had become a Roman Catholic and, since he was not allowed by law to continue in office, he resigned his post. James thanked him for his long years of service by making him Baron Baltimore in the County of Longford in Ireland.

In 1629, by which time James had been succeeded by his son, Charles I, Calvert negotiated with the new monarch for what he hoped would be better land with a kinder climate around Chesapeake Bay. The charter for the new colony, to be called Terra Mariae, or Maryland, after the king's French wife, Henrietta Maria, was only approved by Charles two months after George Calvert's death so it was his son Cecil, 2nd Lord Baltimore, who became Maryland's first governor and turned his father's dream into reality.

George Calvert's descendants appear to have spent very little time at Kiplin Hall, their interests confining them primarily to London or Maryland. The 4th Lord Baltimore, Benedict Calvert, married Charles II's granddaughter, Lady Charlotte Lee. Her grandmother had been Charles II's mistress, Barbara Villiers. Benedict and Charlotte were far from happy together and in 1710

they were divorced. In 1715, she married Christopher Crowe, originally from Ashington, in Northumberland, who made a fortune during his time as British Consul at Livorno in Italy when he was contracted to supply the British fleet in the Mediterranean with wine and oil. He was a noted art collector who also procured items for others. In 1722, Crowe bought Kiplin Hall from his stepson, the 5th Lord Baltimore, for £7,000 and, gradually, he and his descendants bought local land to enlarge the estate to more than 5,000 acres.

Unlike the Calverts, the Crowes lived in the hall and built the service wing and the walled garden. He modernised the 100-year-old house and hung its walls with his collection of paintings. His son, also called Christopher, is known to history as an agricultural pioneer, experimenting with new crops and farming methods, much in the mould of 'Turnip' Townsend and the Colling brothers of Darlington.

In 1818, soon after her marriage to John Delaval Carpenter, 4th Earl of Tyrconnel, Sarah, the daughter of Robert Crowe, inherited Kiplin Hall and lived there with her husband until his death in 1853. Two years after taking up residence, they created a drawing room in the Gothic style on the south side of Kiplin and also landscaped the gardens to the north and east. The census of 1861 records that Lady Tyrconnel lived at the hall, where she was looked after by a staff of 11 servants who also resided there. This number does not take account of other retainers who lived in the surrounding villages.

Sadly, the Tyrconnels had only one child, a daughter, who died while still an infant and the hall was inherited in 1868 by Admiral Walter Talbot. The second son of the 18th Earl of Shrewsbury, who was also an admiral in the Royal Navy, Walter Talbot saw action in the Crimean War. Before he could take up his inheritance of Kiplin Hall, he had to legally change his surname to Carpenter and as Admiral Walter Carpenter he was appointed as Royal Navy aide-de-camp to Queen Victoria. He was a Member of Parliament for County Waterford from 1859 until 1895. It was almost 20 years before 'The Admiral' moved into the hall in 1887 with his second wife, Beatrice de Grey, and his daughter Sarah. He made a number of improvements to the outbuildings and converted the Tyrconnel's Gothic drawing room into a library. Another alteration was the addition of oak panelling in the hall which he and his family used as both a sitting room and for informal dining. During his tenure, Kiplin Hall was the venue for many typical Victorian country house pursuits, including shooting parties and amateur theatricals.

On the death of the Admiral in 1904, his daughter inherited Kiplin. In 1907, she married Christopher Turner and the couple lived at Stoke Rochford in Lincolnshire. In five big sales of land between 1905 and 1930, she sold off

much of the Kiplin Hall estate, together with its farms and cottages, reducing the size of the estate from 5,000 to 120 acres. So with very little rent coming in to help with the maintenance of 'the big house', Kiplin Hall was rented out through most of the 20th century.

In 1938, Sarah made her cousin, Bridget Talbot, a frequent visitor to the property during her childhood, joint owner of Kiplin Hall. Awarded the Italian Medal for Valour for her work with the Anglo-Italian Red Cross during the First World War, this remarkable woman also invented a waterproof torch for lifebelts, which proved to be a great asset to countless sailors.

During the Second World War, Kiplin was requisitioned for military use, first by the Army and then by the Royal Air Force and many of its rooms were converted into flats for officers. After the war, the place became so derelict that it was almost demolished in 1953. That had been Bridget Talbot's intention but on the day before she was going to give the instruction for that to happen she was knocked down on a pedestrian crossing in London and taken to hospital with a broken leg. Subsequently, having become the sole owner of the Hall after Sarah's death in 1957, in 1968 she set up a charitable trust to permanently preserve the property of which she had become guardian at the age of 72.

Kiplin Hall's renovation to the stately home which visitors can see and enjoy today, has taken a long time and a great deal of careful attention to detail.

KEITH PROUD